

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
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P R 201101Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7332  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5335

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: IS, EG  
SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTION TO RECENT EGYPTIAN STATEMENTS

REF: CAIRO 11955

1. WHEN WE HAVE DRAWN THE ATTENTION OF ISRAELI OFFICIALS AND JOURNALISTS TO THE RECENT STATEMENTS AND STEPS TAKEN BY EGYPTIAN LEADERS IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO BE HELPFUL TO THE U.S. ROLE DURING THE VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, WE HAVE FOUND THEM SUSPICIOUS AND CYNICAL REGARDING EGYPTIAN MOTIVES. TYPICAL WAS THE REACTION OF YAEL VERED, MFA DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, IN A CONVERSATION JULY 19.

2. THE RETURN OF THE 19 ISRAELI BODIES. MRS. VERED SAID THAT IT WAS "OBVIOUS TO EVERYBODY" THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD NOT RECENTLY FOUND THE BODIES ON WIDENING THE CANAL,  
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AS THEY HAD CLAIMED, BUT HAD FOUND THEM IN PREVIOUS MONTHS AND HAD HELD THEM TO RETURN AT SOME SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY. WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT EVEN IF THIS WERE TRUE, THE FACT THAT THE EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE CHOSEN THE BEGIN VISIT AS THE "SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY" AND HAD HANDED OVER THE BODIES WITH DIGNITY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ENCOURAGING, BUT MRS. VERED WOULD NOT

HEAR OF IT. HER SHARP REACTION WAS NOT REFLECTED IN THE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE RETURN CEREMONY, WHICH WAS GENERALLY STRAIGHT-FORWARD, NOR IN A COMMENT MADE BY DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN WHO TOLD A RADIO REPORTER JULY 19 THAT "ALL ELEMENTS ARE TODAY TRYING TO TAKE SIMILAR STEPS WHICH WILL BREAK THE PATTERNS WHICH HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT IN THE PAST."

3. THE RETURN OF EGYPTIAN JEWS. IN A SIMILAR FASHION, VERED SAID THAT SADAT KNOWS THAT EGYPTIAN JEWS WILL NOT RETURN SO HIS INVITATION TO THEM IS NOTHING MORE THAN PROPAGANDA. SHE POINTED OUT THAT OTHER ARAB STATES ("EVEN IRAQ") HAVE PREVIOUSLY MADE SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SADAT HAS AGAIN DELIBERATELY CHOSEN WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT. HIS INVITATION CAN SERVE TWO PURPOSES: IT WILL CONVINCE WASHINGTON THAT CAIRO IS BEING FORTHCOMING AT THE TIME OF THE BEGIN VISIT AND IT WILL SHOW ARAFAT THAT EGYPT IS COMMITTED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL BECAUSE THE DEPARTURE OF JEWS FROM ISRAEL CAN ONLY WEAKEN THE STATE. SHE COMMENTED THAT ISRAEL HAS CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF FORMER RESIDENTS OF EGYPT; "THERE ARE TENS OF THOUSANDS," MOST OF WHOM LEFT EGYPT AFTER 1956.

4. SUPPORT FOR SC RES 242. THE REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR 242 IS UNDERSTANDABLE FROM THE EGYPTIAN

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POINT OF VIEW BECAUSE THEY WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT PORTION OF THE RESOLUTION WHICH CITES THE INADMISSABILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORIES BY FORCE.

5. NATURE OF PEACE. THE STATEMENT THAT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS COULD BEGIN FIVE YEARS AFTER THE SIGNING OF A PEACE AGREEMENT IS SIMPLY AN EMPTY STATEMENT AND ISRAEL CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE WHETHER IT IS A VALID ONE OF GOVERNMENTAL INTENTIONS.

6. LINK BETWEEN A PALESTINIAN STATE AND JORDAN. VERED NOTED THAT NO COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AFTER THE RECENT VISIT OF KING HUSSEIN TO CAIRO AND THAT HE AND FAHMY MADE DIFFERENT STATEMENTS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE LINK AND WHEN IT WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WHEN THEY APPEARED ON EGYPTIAN TELEVISION. THESE FACTS INDICATE NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THIS SUBJECT AND IT IS, THEREFORE, MEANINGLESS FOR THE EGYPTIANS TO EMPHASIZE THIS AS ONE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

7. VERED ALSO NOTED THE ABSENCE OF ANY SUCH STATEMENTS,

EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT BE EMPTY AND MEANINGLESS, FROM DAMASCUS. SHE CHARACTERIZED THE SYRIAN VIEW AS BEING: "IF SADAT WANTS TO PLAY THIS GAME, LET HIM; HIS STATEMENTS DO NOT COMMIT US AT ALL." (OTHER MFA OFFICERS COMMENTED TO US THE SAME DAY THAT SADAT OCCASIONALLY FINDS IT USEFUL TO APPEAR "FORTHCOMING AND REASONABLE"; ASSAD ALMOST NEVER DOES.)

8. COMMENT: THESE STATEMENTS ILLUSTRATE THE ATTITUDE WITH WHICH EGYPTIAN STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES ARE VIEWED BY WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS AND BY JOURNALISTS, AND WHICH WE BELIEVE FAIRLY FAITHFULLY MIRRORS THE PUBLIC VIEW. THIS WIDESPREAD DISBELIEF IN THE SINCERITY AND REASONABLENESS OF ARAB LEADERS CONTINUES TO BE AN CONFIDENTIAL

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OBSTACLE TO MEANINGFUL PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS.  
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## Message Attributes

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